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0-5747

NSC 43/1

COPY NO. 10

A REPORT  
TO THE  
NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

by

THE SECRETARY OF STATE

on

GENERAL PRINCIPLES GOVERNING THE CONDUCT OF  
OVERT PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE IN THE INITIAL STAGES OF  
WAR OR EMERGENCY

August 2, 1949

WASHINGTON

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HS/CSG-2424

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August 2, 1949

NOTE BY THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

to the

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

on

GENERAL PRINCIPLES GOVERNING THE CONDUCT OF  
OVERT PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE IN THE INITIAL STAGES OF  
WAR OR EMERGENCY

Reference: NSC. 43

At the request of the Secretary of State the enclosed report on the subject, prepared by the organization established within the Department of State pursuant to paragraph 1 of NSC 43, and concurred in by the policy consultants designated pursuant to paragraph 2-b of NSC 43, is submitted herewith for consideration by the National Security Council.

The enclosed report has been prepared in conformity with paragraph 4 of NSC 43 which provides that "this organization shall as a matter of priority make plans and preparations for an interim arrangement for conducting and coordinating foreign and domestic information programs and overt psychological operations abroad in the initial stages of war or emergency, utilizing wherever practicable existing facilities of the Department of State and of the National Military Establishment."

The Secretary of State recommends that the members of the National Security Council concur in the recommendations contained in the enclosed report.

SIDNEY W. SOUERS  
Executive Secretary

Distribution:

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Resources Board

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GENERAL PRINCIPLES GOVERNING THE CONDUCT OF  
OVERT PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE IN THE INITIAL STAGES OF  
WAR OR EMERGENCY

THE PROBLEM

1. To establish certain general principles pursuant to paragraphs 1 and 4 of NSC 43 as a basis for plans and preparations for conducting and coordinating foreign and domestic information programs and overt psychological operations abroad in the initial stages of war or emergency.

DISCUSSION

2. In order that any interim arrangement may provide as sound a basis as possible for the development of an organization capable of meeting foreseeable wartime requirements, the following general principles are submitted as a basis for plans and preparations in the initial stages of war or declared emergency. (For further discussion see Appendix.)

RECOMMENDATIONS

3. In time of war or declared emergency the President shall establish by Executive Order or other appropriate action a mechanism to coordinate the development and execution of the Federal program of overt psychological warfare, which shall provide initially for:

a. Rapid transition from peace to wartime operations, based primarily on expansion of existing activities and facilities which constitute the essential nucleus for wartime psychological operations.

b. Control of psychological warfare policy direction by the Secretary of State, who shall insure that such policy is coordinated with the National Military Establishment.

c. Control of the execution of approved policy directives by the National Military Establishment in theaters of military operations, and by the Department of State in areas other than theaters of military operations.

d. A channel for transmission of approved policy directives through the Joint Chiefs of Staff to Commanders in theaters of military operations.

e. Coordination of overt and covert psychological warfare operations and censorship and domestic information at the policy level.

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4. Domestic information programs should not be combined with overt psychological warfare in a single agency in time of war or declared emergency but should be coordinated at the policy level.

5. In view of paragraph 4 above:

a. NSC 43 should be amended by deleting the words "and domestic" in paragraph 1, line 3, and paragraph 4, line 3.

b. It should be noted that in this event the National Security Resources Board could consider the appropriate steps required to accomplish the planning and preparations for domestic information.

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APPENDIXDISCUSSION

1. The "Recommendations" in the attached paper establish a frame of reference for the Federal program of overt psychological warfare in the initial stages of war or declared emergency.\* If the recommendations are approved, they will serve as an agreed basis for the development of detailed plans for the interim period. Such plans will be submitted to the National Security Council for approval in the near future. They will provide for the coordination of psychological warfare operations with domestic information programs, but will not develop operational plans and requirements for the war-time conduct of domestic information activities.

2. With respect to domestic information programs, it is concluded that these should not be combined with overt psychological warfare in a single agency in time of war or emergency. This conclusion is unanimously supported by the Policy Consultants representing the Department of State, the National Military Establishment and the National Security Resources Board, on the basis of experience in the last war and foreseeable wartime requirements in the future. Mr. Elmer Davis in his final report to the President as Director of OWI concluded that domestic information programs should not be conducted by the agency responsible for psychological warfare, but should be attached directly to the office of the President. Without passing judgment at this time on the proper organization of domestic information functions in wartime, it is the view of the Department of State that the requirements for planning domestic information programs are essentially different from those in the field of psychological warfare. Planning for domestic information is closely and intimately related to plans for civilian defense, industrial mobilization, censorship, etc., which are conducted under the guidance of the National Security Resources Board. The methods, techniques, and operational procedures employed in overt psychological warfare differ from those employed in the conduct of domestic information programs. While the Department of State has clear responsibility in the field of foreign information propaganda and overt psychological warfare, it has neither the authority nor the competence to deal with operational plans and requirements for domestic information. It is concluded, therefore, that NSC 43 should be amended to exclude plans and preparations for the conduct of domestic information programs, and that in this event the National Security Resources Board could consider the appropriate steps required to accomplish the planning and preparations for domestic information

\* The term "emergency" or "declared emergency" is defined as "a state of national emergency declared by the President."

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programs in the initial stages of war or emergency. In order to assure liaison with NSRB, it is suggested that the provision for a policy consultant and liaison representative of this agency as provided in NSC 43, be retained.

3. With respect to the interim arrangement for overt psychological warfare, a relatively simple coordinating mechanism is contemplated. The initial requirement is to assure continuity of propaganda policy and rapid transition of propaganda operations from a state of peace to a state of war or emergency. In addition to the general principles enumerated in the paper, the following factors have been considered:

a. Propaganda is one of the four primary means by which national policies are implemented. It is a permanent tool of foreign policy. It is fully effective only when coordinated with the other means -- diplomatic, military, economic.

b. The essential elements which constitute the nucleus for psychological warfare activities are now in being. They consist of:

(1) The foreign information services of the Department of State -- radio, press, motion pictures, information offices abroad.

(2) The coordinating facilities provided in NSC 4.

(3) The planning responsibilities authorized under NSC 43.

(4) The covert propaganda operations of CIA.

(5) The Armed Forces' overt information services in occupied areas, and procedures for coordination with U. S. Military Commanders of the areas (including unified commands).

(6) The broadcast monitoring service of CIA.

(7) The intelligence and research facilities of the U. S. Government.

c. To insure continuity of policy and rapid transition of operations, planning for psychological warfare in emergency or the initial stages of war should be based upon expansion of existing elements listed above.

d. Psychological warfare is fully effective only (1) when propaganda policies are based upon over-all national policies and plans, and (2) when there is unified control over the

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formulation of such propaganda policies and their coordinated implementation.

e. Clearly defined national policies are essential prerequisites for psychological warfare. The President is responsible for determining national policies at the highest level in peace and in war.

f. The responsibility under the President for formulation of psychological warfare directives should be vested in the Secretary of State, who shall insure that such directives are coordinated with the National Military Establishment.

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